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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

349th meeting

Wednesday, 8 April 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chair: Before the Commission proceeds to hear from delegations in the general debate, I would like to bring the attention of members to the schedule of meetings as set out in document A/CN.10/2015/CRP.1/Rev.1, which has been distributed in the room. As members of the Commission will recall, the schedule is based on the practice of previous years, whereby we allocate the number of meetings for each Working Group on an equitable basis. Nine meetings will be allocated for each Working Group this year.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the schedule of meetings as set out in document A/CN.10/2015/CRP.1/Rev.1?

It was so decided.

General debate (*continued*)

The Chair: The Commission will now continue its general debate by turning to the list of speakers inscribed for the debate. I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible. So as to maximize the time available to us during the general debate, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations that have already been inscribed on the list to keep in mind that the rolling list implies that they should be prepared to take the floor at any time, possibly even sooner than they had originally planned to speak. I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and 10 minutes for delegations making statements in a national capacity.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude to the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Ambassador Fodé Seck, for his leadership in organizing the general debate, and to Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her statement two days ago (see A/CN.10/PV.344), which significantly contributed to the constructive and comprehensive nature of our deliberations today. I assure you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat, of the full support of the Georgian delegation in order for this session to reach a successful outcome.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their related materials and technologies and the risk of nuclear terrorism represent a serious threat to human security. The problem is global and asymmetrical in its nature, and requires a high level of coordination and cooperation both regionally and internationally. In that regard, full compliance with the obligations under the relevant international arrangements — such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) — should be emphasized as one of the international community's main priorities.

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Georgia continues to consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the core component of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and we believe that the credibility of the NPT lies in the effective implementation of its mutually reinforcing pillars. We also hope that one of the most important events in the 2015 disarmament calendar, the NPT Review Conference, will be successful. That success depends upon us and on our will to act and deliberate in a constructive manner without any double standards. For its part, Georgia is strongly committed to working constructively towards a positive outcome.

In that context, it is with great pleasure that I note that, in cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Government of Georgia organized a side event on 29 October 2014 entitled "Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) National Action Plans: Meeting the Challenges of International Security". Georgia is the first country to have adopted such a plan. We plan to organize similar events with our partners in future.

We regret that an important component of the international security machinery, namely, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), continues to fail to fulfil its mandate in an effective manner. Undoubtedly, the CD should exercise a significantly greater influence and produce a larger impact in the field of its competency, especially in view of the deteriorating international security environment. To achieve that goal, we all should spare no effort in promoting the revitalization of that unique negotiations forum, which played a crucial role in bringing about several major international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

In recent years, there have been many discussions about the inadequacy of existing security arrangements to respond to twenty-first century requirements. We share that view, in part. However, taking into account the universal nature of the fundamental principles upon which the security architecture rests, we believe that the main problem is more a question of the unwillingness of certain countries to strictly comply with their obligations, rather than of the imperfection of the system itself. In certain cases, non-compliance can irreversibly erode the current security system and produce undesired large-scale negative implications, which is exactly what we are witnessing today.

Security assurances provided to Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum in connection with its accession to the NPT have been ignored, and the Russian Federation — one of the guarantor States — has openly challenged Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is an extremely dangerous development that threatens to have, inter alia, far-reaching negative implications for the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process. The ongoing occupation of Ukrainian territories where nuclear facilities and materials are located and the lack of legitimate control are additional challenges to the international security.

The Ukrainian case is not the only case in which Russia remains in serious material breach of the Charter of the United Nations and other treaties under international law. In August 2008, the Russian Federation launched a large-scale military campaign against Georgia, which resulted in the occupation of more than 20 per cent of Georgian territory. The occupation of our sovereign territory, in violation of the six-point ceasefire agreement of August 2008, no doubt represents a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, since it creates fertile ground for all sorts of illegal activities, including the proliferation and accumulation of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials and illicit transfers of conventional arms. In that regard, I would like to remind the Commission that there have been several documented attempts of nuclear smuggling via the occupied Georgian regions, of which the international community has been duly informed.

Currently, there are approximately 12,000 Russian occupation troops stationed illegally in Georgia. In addition to the personnel build-up, Russia has fortified its military infrastructure in the occupied territories and deployed additional equipment to its military bases. The Russian infrastructure and equipment includes military and naval bases, airfields, offensive weaponry such as tanks, armoured personnel carriers, Grad weapons, surface-to-air missile systems, multiple-launch rocket systems — so-called Smerch units — self-propelled howitzers, air defence systems and the tactical operational missile launch system Scarab B, also known as Tochka U, which can be equipped with both conventional and nuclear warheads. In addition to the establishment of military bases, Russia is refurbishing and developing new transport infrastructure in the occupied Georgian territories that will allow Moscow to move its forces and hardware more rapidly.

Despite the direct call of the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement to withdraw to the pre-war positions, over the years the Russian military forces have expanded the occupation zone and installed barbed wire fences and other artificial obstacles along the occupation line to hinder, inter alia, people-to-people contact and movement in both directions. The military build-up will further intensify as a result of the implementation of the so-called treaties on alliance and integration, signed between Moscow and its occupation regimes in Georgian territories. These documents represent a further step towards the de facto annexation of our regions.

When it comes to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, what the Russian Federation needs to do without any further delay is fully to comply with its obligations under the United Nations Charter, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe arrangements, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and with the commitments it undertook when it signed the Budapest Memorandum and the August 2008 ceasefire agreement — all of which require the Russian Federation to end its illegal occupation of sovereign territories in Georgia and Ukraine.

In conclusion, I would like to note that is clear that nothing is ever perfect, including the security architecture. However, bearing in mind the universality of its fundamental principles, we must admit that the existing system has not exhausted its potential to further facilitate and strengthen security and stability. But firm political will and readiness to comply with international law are needed. Otherwise, the process of erosion will become irreversible and irretrievably undermine the existing security architecture.

Mr. Garrido (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to wish you every success in the work this year. I would also like to express our firm commitment to contributing actively and positively to the outcome of the deliberations. I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge and express our thanks for the outstanding work led by Ms. Angela Kane at the helm of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We also wish to align ourselves with statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Ecuador on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.348). I would now like to add some specific considerations and insights from the perspective of the delegation of Chile.

Chile is, and always has been, a strong supporter and promoter of general and complete disarmament and, in line with its foreign policy, favours debate in a broad, transparent and democratic multilateral space. This approach is clearly expressed in Chile's active participation in disarmament and international security forums at the regional and global level. My country firmly believes in the principle of indivisibility of the international security, that is, that all States, regardless of their size or power, have a shared responsibility to contribute to the strengthening of a rules- and cooperation-based international order.

We support the proposal that this forum hold a more focused discussion that is able to accurately identify elements in the field of disarmament that allow us to fully carry our task of generating recommendations and to leave behind 15 years of stagnation. The Disarmament Commission has not escaped the crisis facing the disarmament machinery, which, operating under the most extreme version of the consensus rule, has amplified that tool's perennial meaning and scope as a generator of dialogue and developer of comprehensive agreements.

A goal that is very important for Chile is the democratization of international organizations, the democratization of multilateral practice. To achieve it, we must add voices that are missing in this debate. Civil society is expected to play a major role in disarmament issues, leaving behind procedural constraints and demanding more accountability and transparency from State actors. Public opinion demands concrete results from us.

For Chile, nuclear disarmament is, in the context of weapons of mass destruction, the most pressing task for its unparalleled capacity for destruction that compromises the very existence of humankind, and therefore their inclusion in the discussions in this forum is fundamental. We would have liked to have agreed a more targeted approach to address this issue.

In addition, we note that in recent years we have been successful in strengthening and advancing instruments that regulate the field of conventional arms, represent significant progress in international humanitarian law

and are a clear expression of the concept of human security that puts humans at the centre of our work. We therefore also consider it important to mainstream practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

We are not naive, and we know that lack of political will is what has prevented us from moving forward in recent years. Nevertheless, we would have liked to see a third item added to the agenda as a way of introducing into the debate new and pressing issues in the field of disarmament and international security, and injecting flexibility in a system that has been made rigid by an inevitable linkage between two topics that influence each other.

In conclusion, I would like to make an appeal to all delegations to take a pragmatic approach and behave with maximum flexibility at the beginning of a new cycle in the work of the Commission, for the purpose of achieving concrete results. To do that, Mr. Chair, you can count on the commitment and cooperation of our delegation.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you once again, Mr. Chair, on your election. I also congratulate the newly elected Vice-Chairs. I wish you, Sir, a productive session and assure you that you can count on our full support.

This year we begin a new three-year cycle of the Disarmament Commission, which should allow us to overcome the impasse in which we have remained for too many years. In this new cycle, we must go the extra mile and adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach that allows us to get out of an immobility that we cannot afford. It is necessary to find areas of consensus, with the determination to reach agreements.

The ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will begin here on 27 April. Spain hopes that the Conference will serve to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and we hope that it will enable us to move forward in a balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

To achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, which is our goal, we must demand gradual cuts from States possessing nuclear weapons and that they implement measures of trust and transparency. We therefore call upon those States, especially those with larger arsenals, to continue negotiations on disarmament. In that regard, we greatly appreciate the proposal by the United States to reduce strategic arsenals beyond the threshold established in the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Similarly, we appeal to the eight States listed in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to sign and ratify it in order to facilitate its immediate entry into force. We also advocate for the progressive reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategies. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States respect their commitment not to use or threaten to use their nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, and we ask that States that have not yet undertaken that commitment take steps to do so as soon as possible.

Spain also supports the mandate set out in document CD/1299 for the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. The mandate is flexible and does not exclude any negotiating options, so that the process can begin without prejudging the conduct or final results of the negotiations. Meanwhile, we encourage States that have not yet done so to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material as proof of their commitment.

Spain supports the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, as they represent another step closer to the ultimate goal of complete disarmament. In that regard, we regret that we have still not been able to hold a conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We hope that it will take place as soon as possible and that the sense of responsibility among all concerned will help to make it successful.

Spain also attaches great importance to the humanitarian aspect of the preamble to the NPT and the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, concerning the devastating consequences of a nuclear detonation. That is a matter of great interest and one that we feel we should respond to pragmatically through a process of gradual nuclear disarmament, and therefore an issue that is very relevant to this session of the Disarmament Commission.

One important goal that we should foster is ensuring the continued maintenance of outer space as a safe and stable environment, and its peaceful use on a equitable and multilaterally accepted basis. We

should therefore promote measures that encourage trust and transparency, including the adoption of a code of conduct.

We should not forget other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. Spain is closely following the successful chemical disarmament process in Syria being jointly conducted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations. However, despite the progress that has been made in implementing the provisions of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), some very worrying issues remain. We therefore support the OPCW's efforts to investigate the attacks in which chlorine was used as a chemical weapon last year and possibly in recent weeks as well.

With regard to biological weapons, 2015 will see the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the prelude to its eighth Review Conference, to be held in 2016. Spain would like to highlight the steps that have been taken towards universalizing the Convention, to which 172 States are already party, and welcomes the progress that has been made in its implementation at the national level, in the related science and technology and in implementing measures of trust and cooperation.

I would like to make a positive point here on the reasons for satisfaction in the area of conventional arms. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, on 24 December, is a triumph that enables conventional arms exports to be tied to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in the countries to which they are exported. Spain has been an active contributor to the process; we were one of the first States to sign and ratify the Treaty, and we made the decision to implement it provisionally as soon as we signed. We have also participated in numerous bilateral and multilateral activities designed to promote its effective implementation. The good pace of ratification, with 50 States ratifying the Treaty in a short period, shows that it is still possible to make substantial progress in the area of disarmament.

Spain also considers the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to be a serious threat to peace and security, as well as to development, since it is linked to armed conflict, transnational organized crime and terrorism. We therefore welcome the consensus reached during the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2117 (2013).

I cannot conclude without mentioning how essential it is to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of non-State actors, particularly terrorist groups. We stress how important it is that all States comply with their obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009). Spain, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), is designing a strategy for implementing it that will be presented in 2016 at the comprehensive review of the resolution planned for that year. We hope we can rely on the active participation of all Member States throughout the review process. The challenges facing us are alarming and our determination to address them must not falter.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairship of this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I am confident that your wealth of diplomatic experience and wisdom will help lead this session to positive results. The Chinese delegation would like to assure you of its full cooperation, and to congratulate Kazakhstan and Morocco on their elections as Chairs of the Working Groups.

The trend of our times has been the pursuit of peace, development and win-win cooperation. Yet meanwhile we are faced with more cross-cutting international security challenges than ever before. Maintaining international security remains an arduous task. In these new circumstances, all countries should abandon a Cold War mentality and zero-sum game theory and instead foster a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, advance global security governance in a coordinated way, and develop a new and win-win approach to security that is built, shared and maintained by all.

China stands for the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons. We are firmly committed to a nuclear policy based on self-defence and have upheld our commitment to not be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances, or to use or threaten to use nuclear

weapons unconditionally against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones. China has exercised the utmost restraint in the scale and development of its nuclear arsenal and has never participated in any kind of nuclear arms race. We will continue to keep our nuclear force at the minimum level required for national security.

China is of the view that it is important to actively pursue the international nuclear disarmament process on the basiss of the principles of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all. The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to take the lead in reducing them drastically and substantively. China supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, is committed to pushing for its early entry into force and will continue to honour its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear testing. China hopes that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva will reach consensus on its programme of work as soon as possible so that it can start its substantive work, including negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty.

China firmly opposes nuclear proliferation, supports the consolidation and improvement of the international non-proliferation regime and seeks the peaceful settlement of regional nuclear issues through dialogue and negotiation. We welcome the key parameters of the joint comprehensive plan of action recently reached by P5+1 and Iran in Lausanne. China contributed positively to resolving the difficult issues and sticking points in the negotiations, and is prepared to work with other relevant parties to reach a mutually beneficial comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme as soon as possible. The P5+1 talks constitute a viable and effective mechanism to push forward the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and maintain peace and stability. China will continue to engage in dialogue with all the relevant parties to address the concerns of all in a balanced manner, with a view to easing current tensions and creating and consolidating the conditions conducive to the earliest possible resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

China has always and continues to respect and support the efforts of the non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned. Last year, together with the other four nuclear-weapon States, China signed the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. The Chinese Government has submitted a relevant proposal to the National People's Congress for deliberation. China has resolved all pending issues with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on a protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in South-East Asia and is ready to sign that protocol. China supports the early convening of an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The upcoming 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is of great significance. All parties should seize that opportunity to promote the purposes and objectives of the Treaty in a comprehensive and balanced manner, and crown the conference with substantive achievements. China will submit is national report to the Review Conference. Thanks to the combined efforts of all involved, the P-5 working group on the glossary of key nuclear terms, led by China, has reached preliminary agreement on the glossary, which will be submitted to the Review Conference.

It is in the interest of all countries to maintain peace and prevent an arms race in outer space. Lasting peace and security in outer space can be truly realized only through the negotiation of a multilateral agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In June 2014, based upon the new security landscape in outer space and various stakeholders' suggestions, China and the Russian Federation submitted an updated version of the draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which had been jointly submitted by the two countries in 2008. China welcomes comments and suggestions from all parties, preferably in written form, to collectively improve the draft.

China has always supported practical and feasible confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms control, and has made continuous efforts to promote international and regional disarmament processes. China has devoted itself to transparency and confidence-building in the field of conventional arms control, and has been an active participant in both the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. In 2013, the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms reviewed the Register.

China believes that one of the most pressing tasks is to improve the universality of the Register, that is, to increase the number of participating countries.

China attaches great importance to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and has been earnestly implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, China has adopted a series of measures on legislation, law enforcement, capacity building, international exchange and cooperation, with remarkable results. China constructively participated in a fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action last year, and hopes that the open-ended meeting of governmental experts to be held this June will bring about a positive outcome.

China supports the international community's efforts to take the measures necessary to regulate the international trade in conventional arms and to combat the illicit transfer and trafficking of conventional arms. China has constructively participated in the Arms Trade Treaty negotiation process, and is currently looking into the issue of acceding to that Treaty. China is ready to strengthen cooperation with all parties with a view to establishing a regulated and reasonable arms trade order.

China attaches great importance to and actively participates in the ongoing discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems. We are of the view that the international community should study the matter thoroughly and properly address the relevant concerns on the basis of comprehensive and inclusive discussions.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. The multilateral disarmament machinery established after the Second World War has made tremendous contributions to safeguarding world peace and security. As one of the deliberative bodies under the United Nations framework, the UNDC has played an important role in setting priority areas for multilateral disarmament negotiations. In recent years, the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the UNDC, has been progressing very slowly. China hopes that every party will take a rational and practical attitude towards the status and role of the UNDC, conduct work in a positive and pragmatic manner and bridge gaps in order to make positive progress during this round of review.

Ms. Urruela Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to lead the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We would like to endorse the statements delivered by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.344). We would, however, like to offer some comments on the work of the Commission in our national capacity.

My delegation attaches great importance to the Disarmament Commission, the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery. The Commission affords us an opportunity to discuss specific issues with a view to presenting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. We hope that this new cycle will provide fresh impetus to this important body, and will enable us to move beyond the political impasse that made it impossible to adopt recommendations for over a decade. We must continue to pursue the objective of producing consensus recommendations while taking inspiration from what the Disarmament Commission has achieved in the past, which the reason behind our continued belief in the unity of the Commission.

With only a few weeks until the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and faced with a situation that is far from encouraging, we welcomed the news of the agreement reached between the E3+3 and the Islamic Republic of Iran. After several years of complex and delicate negotiations, this is a great milestone, not only for diplomacy but also for the global regime for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, when it comes to nuclear disarmament, there are no similar results that elicit the same level of optimism.

The imbalance between non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament represents the greatest challenge that we have to face, not only in the framework of the NPT but also within the disarmament machinery. That imbalance is the underlying cause of the disfunction and paralysis that, unfortunately, has characterized for years the two major bodies of the disarmament machinery, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime; it is essential

to achieving nuclear disarmament. However, its continued relevance and effective application depend on equal attention being paid to the three interrelated and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

As a State party to the Treaty, we are committed to the promotion of its universality and the full compliance with each of its provisions. In the run-up to the NPT Review Conference, it is of great importance that the international community not limit itself to simply reiterating previous commitments, the deadlines of which cannot be extended indefinitely. Non-nuclear-weapon States have clearly fulfilled their part of the commitment. Now it is up to States that possess such weapons to do the same.

Despite all of that, we are encouraged by the renewed interest and dynamism of the international community to make it clear that we will not wait on a small group of nuclear-weapon States to determine when, and if, we will achieve nuclear disarmament. That is why we support the consideration of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in the debate in the United Nations. In that regard, the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and, more recently, in Vienna have been instrumental in initiating such a debate. We welcome the endorsement by CELAC member countries of the Austrian Pledge, which was announced at the end of the latest Conference. There can be no doubt that the use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and incompatible with international humanitarian law. In the light of the risk that they represent, it is urgent to adopt a legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an essential component of nuclear disarmament. Guatemala is proud to be a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely inhabited part of the planet and served as an example and inspiration in the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free regions. That is why my delegation welcomes the holding of the third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which will take in April in New York. We also regret that it was not possible to hold the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and we call upon all the States concerned to redouble their efforts to ensure that it can be held as soon as possible. Given the unacceptable risk that the very existence of these weapons poses to humankind, we consider it essential to maintain the moratorium on nuclear tests until the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

With regard to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, we believe they are essential tools for relieving and diffusing tensions and avoiding the escalation conflicts and crises between countries. Bearing in mind the current situation, transparency and confidence-building have proven to be valuable tools in multilateralism. It is essential that we move forward in our work so we can see how we can further improve those measures. Recent developments in the field of conventional weapons are encouraging and help to build confidence. The adoption and entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, the first legally binding instrument that aims to significantly reduce the human cost of arms proliferation worldwide and prevent arms from being diverted into the illicit market, among other things, represents a genuine milestone in this field.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its follow-up mechanisms. We welcome the success achieved in the latest Review Conference. However, we note with concern the lack of progress during the recently held fifth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, in particular in considering the issue of munitions in the Programme of Action, despite the repetition of this point by a great number of delegations, including ours, and above all because they constitute the essence of the lethal nature of firearms and by them leaving out the consideration of the illicit arms trade is incomplete.

Finally, Guatemala will participate constructively in the work of this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in order to help it carry out its mandate. We hope that the three-year cycle of deliberations that starts this year will substantively address the two items on its agenda as two mutually reinforcing goals.

Mr. AlAjmi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has the pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We also congratulate the other

members of the Bureau. We are confident that your abilities and experience will contribute to the successful outcome of this session and to the formulation of recommendations that reflect the concerns of all Member States.

We associate ourselves with the statement (see A/CN.10/PV.348) delivered by the representative Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation underscores the increasingly important role of multilateral diplomacy, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as the only sustainable means to address disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. The UNDC is one of the main pillars in that regard, as it is the sole specialized, deliberative and multilateral body mandated to formulate recommendations on the items on its agenda and to serve as a forum to exchange views and develop intiatives in order to establish effective frameworks in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The UNDC meets today as part of its substantive cycle for this year. We are hopeful that all participating delegations will contribute in order to revive the Commission's previous role and leave behind the stagnation that has lasted for 15 years and to formulate new recommendations with regard to the items on its agenda.

With regard to the first item on its agenda, namely, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", despite seven decades of international multilateral efforts to contain the danger of this destructive and lethal category of weapons, which represent a priority for the United Nations and which embodied the declared objectives of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Commission has never achieved a successful outcome that would allow it to positively affect the mechanisms of multilateral disarmament, in particular in the Conference on Disarmament, where there has been a stalemate for more than two decades and which, like the UNDC, has been been unable to reach consensus on the items on its agenda.

Regional and subregional efforts are crucial to securing the successful outcome of any international endeavour in order to create a better world of peace and security and to enhance cooperation among all nations. The establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are therefore crucial in creating a world free of nuclear weapons. The convening of the current cycle of the Disarmament Commission, in the run-up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, is an important opportunity for the international community to renew its support for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. That noble goal has yet to be realized, despite the calls made at the 1995 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences for the establishment of such a zone and the holding of a conference on that issue, which was to be convened in 2012. That goal will be achieved only through the accession of Israel to the NPT and the placement of its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We welcome the increased attention that has been focused on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We also welcome the outcomes of the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences. It is time that we draft a comprehensive convention that prohibits the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, threat of use and use of nuclear weapons and that provides for their destruction.

With regard to the second item on the agenda, namely "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", we wish to underscore the important role that the UNDC guidelines adopted in 1996 play in finding such measures at the regional and international levels. In order to achieve peace and security at the regional and international levels and to increase transparency and dialogue on a voluntary basis, compliance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is necessary, in particular non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the sovereign equality of all Member States, the prohibition of the threat or use of force against any State, the inalienable right of all nations under the yoke of occupation to decide their fate and to reject foreign occupation, and the unlawfulness of occupying other countries or lands and preventing their inhabitants from attaining political independence.

In that connection, I would like to underscore the importance of compliance with all international instruments, including the Convention on Prohibitions or Retrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, as well as the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their

Ammunition and other Related Materials, and the International Tracing Instrument.

In conclusion, we understand that producing recommendations on this year's agenda items would be a great achievement after years without results. We hope that all participating delegations will demonstrate the political will required to successfully meet disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We stand ready to constructively contribute to the deliberations.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for this year's substantive session, as well as the other members of the Bureau. I wish everyone every success in their work and I assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348). I would like to make comments in my nation's capacity with regard to my country's general views and positions on the work of the Disarmament Commission.

As we are all aware, the UNDC has been in a stalemate for 15 years, during which the Commission has not delivered any results that could contribute to world peace and security. The majority of Member States have made continuous efforts to achieve substantial agreement on the main issues. However, all those efforts have not produced the desired results. Worse, this year's session started without agreement on its agenda items; it was a relief when we were finally able to do so.

As the sole representative deliberative body in the field of disarmament, the UNDC has an important role to play within the United Nations disarmament machinery. Success at the UNDC would have a positive impact on spurring progress in the disarmament machinery as a whole. Therefore, we need to put UNDC back on track. What should be done in order to achieve that? What is the main link in the chain? Which knot should first be untangled before moving on to the others?

My delegation does not think that the main problem lies in procedures or working methods. There is a political obstacle facing the Commission: the existence of political will that is opposed to the UNDC's progress. The UNDC is a multilateral deliberative forum. Multilateral deliberations should be based on a spirit of multilateralism, and said spirit should be based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Any form of multilateral deliberation or negotiation will fail if there is insistence upon unilateral policies or such policies are pursued. Like other United Nations forums, the UNDC should not be a place where one side's policies or purposes are pursued. The work of the Commission should not be held hostage to unilateral policy. The arbitrariness and double standards evinced by certain countries, which, against the spirit of multilateral cooperation, infringe upon the security interests of small countries, while treating their own interests as absolute, only bring about mistrust and confrontation, far from trust-based consultations and negotiations. It is hard to foresee a breakthrough in UNDC deliberations unless the pursuit of a unilateral stance and double standards is properly adressed.

If there are any among us who wishes to see the UNDC get back to work, a bold change in that negative political position must take place. My delegation believes that, when each and every member demonstrates the political will necessary to advance the work of the UNDC in the interests of peace and security for all humankind, there will be a real political basis from which the substantial work of the UNDC can be carried out. That is the lesson to be learned from the reality of the Commission, which has yielded no results in the past 15 years. We do not want to see those 15 years repeated.

Nuclear disarmament — one of the keys to guaranteeing peace and security in the world — can now be said to be at a crossroads. Half a century ago, there were intensive debates in United Nations disarmament forums as to the priority between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Because some nuclear-weapon States pledged to strive for nuclear disarmament, the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was made possible.

However, the nuclear disarmament of those nuclear-weapon States did not take place as it had been pledged. Although some bilateral agreements were reached on reducing the number of obsolete nuclear weapons, the modernization of other weapons was in fact accelerated; nuclear threats were even made to non-nuclear-weapon States. The consequences of that began to appear in the late 1990s with the emergence

of new nuclear-weapon States. Today the number of nuclear-weapon States is almost double what it was in 1968, when the NPT was adopted. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, military actions and nuclear threats aimed at overthrowing sovereign States by force have become more blatant.

The country that was the first to manufacture and use nuclear weapons, thereby committing atrocities involving the killing many civilians, is still sitting on the world's largest number of nuclear weapons, has speeded up its modernization of those weapons and continues to resort to anachronistic, old-fashioned power politics. The so-called ideal of a nuclear-free world it has put forth has already been exposed as nothing but deceptive hypocrisy, designed to cover up the modernization of its nuclear weapons. The move to modernize nuclear weapons and deploy missile defence systems spanning the globe, pursued by the number-one nuclear Power without regard for the concerns of the international community, affects the interests of other nuclear-weapon States and has had serious long-term consequences for world peace and security.

The pivot to Asia is a new global strategy of the United States aimed at squeezing Asia, particularly North-East Asia, from every side and ultimately taking control of it. In order to pursue the new strategy, new missile defence systems are being introduced into Asia, more than 60 per cent of United States naval power has been concentrated in the region and its global missile strike capabilities are being rapidly strengthened. Comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament, and the removal of this ongoing threat to world peace and security, will be possible only when the number-one nuclear Power abandons its new strategy, based on a nuclear-weapon doctrine and global missile defence systems, and takes practical action to lead nuclear disarmament.

The Korean peninsula is a dangerous powder keg where the number-one nuclear-weapon State and the youngest of those States confront each other fiercely in a state of war. The Korean peninsula is now the poster child for the consequences arising from a nuclear-weapon State's breaking of its pledge to non-nuclear-weapon States at the time of the adoption of the NPT.

I would now like to draw the particular attention of the South Korean delegation to the following points.

Instead of providing security assurances to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which acceded to NPT in 1985, the United States has continued to intensify its nuclear threat. That nuclear threat, aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is not potential or abstract but practical and physical. Strategic nuclear bombers fly non-stop from the United States mainland or from Guam to the Korean peninsula to stage drills of dropping nuclear bombs several times each year. Aircraft carriers and submarines loaded with nuclear missiles constantly enter the waters around the Korean peninsula to take part in nuclear war exercises aimed at occupying Pyongyang.

The cruel nuclear threat and blackmail of the State that has been number one in nuclear arms for more than half a century, and its hostile policies, has compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to possess nuclear weapons, and the ever-increasing United States nuclear threat has left us with no choice but to bolster our deterrent capabilities in order to cope with it. Our nuclear forces are the life and soul of our nation and can be neither given up nor exchanged at any price as long as the nuclear threat to us persists. South Korea must understand this. Absurd actions and clashes result because it makes no attempt to understand it correctly. I urge South Korea to refrain from actions and attacks that bring disgrace on the Korean nation. The era when the number-one nuclear Power posed a unilateral nuclear threat to the world has gone forever, and military threats cannot solve our problems.

The joint military exercises being staged across South Korea this year, which started on 2 March and will last until the end of April, are unusually provocative and therefore particularly likely to spark a war. They are highly dangerous nuclear war drills for an invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, since they are designed to swiftly introduce and deploy forward United States forces of aggression on the Korean peninsula, mounting a surprise pre-emptive attack in which combined forces remove the country's headquarters and occupy Pyongyang. It should be particularly noted that these large-scale exercises began in the wake of President Obama's openly stating, on 22 January, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be toppled.

South Korea has taken a position welcoming this through its own practical actions. South Korea immediately acts, willingly or not, when the superpower says something, and it is South Korea that sneezes when the superpower catches a cold. The insistence by the United States that these military

exercises are defensive in nature is a cover for its move to attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and its argument that they are conducted annually is a smokescreen to conceal its preparations for a surprise invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The character and target of these war exercises clearly show the extent to which the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has reached a stage of real belligerent action. The war exercises conducted by the United States in South Korea constitute open infringement of the sovereignty and dignity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a grave military provocation. It is our army's position that if a single shell should drop anywhere where the Democratic People's Republic of Korea exercises sovereignty, it will immediately take action to oppose it.

It is not that the increasingly blatant military moves of the United States on the Korean peninsula and in its vicinity target only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The real intention of the expanded United States policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is to lay siege to North-East Asia on a vast scale and bring the region under its high-handed and arbitrary control. To that end, the United States continues to intentionally exacerbate the situation on the Korean peninsula and push it to the brink of war. It is sophistry typical only of the United States to insist that military provocations staged on other countries' lands are annual, or defensive, and to denounce legal countermeasures taken in self-defence of one's own territory as provocative or threatening.

The UNDC, and the United Nations disarmament machinery in general, today faces serious challenges that need to be urgently addressed. The grave reality on the Korean peninsula should by itself be enough to show how serious these challenges are for the international community in its efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. It also reveals its cause. My delegation wishes to draw the Commission's special attention to the encroachment upon the sovereignty of States and the destruction of their internal arrangements through open nuclear threat, exercises, sanctions, blockades and so on.

Comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament is the overriding priority, as has been consistently expressed as a principled position by the Non-Aligned Movement. In order to achieve comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament, the country with the largest number of nuclear weapons should take the lead. That country has a special responsibility, and our progress in disarmament deliberations in general will depend upon the political will of that country.

If South Korea really wants to see a world without nuclear weapons it must demand the country with the special responsibility for global nuclear disarmament to change its policy and take the lead in the disarmament process. If South Korea can do this, it will mean that it can abandon its humiliating and shameful foreign policy and behaviour and contribute to the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole. It will also ensure durable peace and security on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

My delegation hopes that the UNDC will be able to commence substantial deliberations leading to a breakthrough in the field of nuclear disarmament this year on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Mr. Emvula (Namibia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for its 2015 substantive session. I assure you of my delegation's full support. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections, Mr. Chair, and express appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, for his efforts during his tenure as Chair of the UNDC at its 2014 substantive session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

Progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is essential to strengthening international peace and security. In that context, we wish to stress that nuclear disarmament should remain the highest priority on the agenda of the UNDC.

Namibia strongly believes that resolution 69/58, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", is an appropriate outline for pursuing the objective of nuclear disarmament. We are confident that the resolution will enable the international community to make tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. However, that can happen only if there is political will to do so. To that end, we wish to emphasize that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is essential that all non-nuclear-weapon States be provided with universal,

unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances by all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Improving or modernizing existing nuclear weapons, including developing new types of nuclear weapons, contradicts the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament. Such activities are also in contradiction with the commitments already undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States.

Namibia remains a committed signatory to the Pelindaba Treaty, the instrument that provides a shield for Africa by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those destructive weapons there, which is currently a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Like many other African States parties to the Treaty, Namibia urges the remaining States, particularly those mentioned in Protocol III, to take all the necessary measures to ensure its immediate ratification.

In the same vein, Namibia supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and expresses concern over the fact that commitments and obligations set forth in the Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, have not been implemented. We join those who are calling for the full implementation of the Action Plan with respect to nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Last but not least, we wish to highlight that multilateral disarmament negotiations will achieve tangible results only if there is genuine and sincere political will to support the process.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, I wish to reiterate our full support for you, the Bureau and the work of the UNDC.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as the other members of the Bureau. I would like to express at the outset the full support of my delegation for your efforts.

(*spoke in English*)

Brazil aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Ecuador (see A/CN.10/PV.348) on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

We can all agree that the multilateral disarmament architecture plays a crucial role in fostering dialogue and building confidence among States, thus contributing to the promotion of peace and security. At the same time, it should be recognized that the international community is not making the best use of the tools and opportunities offered by the existing machinery. The UNDC's potential has not been fulfilled in the last few years. We need to take better advantage of the universal membership of the Commission and explore more deeply the fact that it is not bound by a narrow thematic agenda.

The current global security situation is certainly complex, yet we have been able to agree on specific issues and adopt recommendations even during critical times, such as the Cold War. To name only a few important outcomes of past UNDC sessions, I would underscore the principles agreed to in 1988 on verification, which is a fundamental element of any disarmament treaty, the guidelines for international arms transfers of 1996 and the guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones of 1999. The latter has been of important political value to the development of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including with regard to the expected establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

In our opinion, the main obstacles to further progress in the UNDC is the lack of political will rather than procedural issues, as has been claimed by some. However, we are mindful of the fact that procedural aspects, particularly the setting of the agenda, need to be examined with special attention in order to enable meaningful deliberations. In that context, we wish to highlight that resolution 69/77 recommends that the UNDC agenda provide for focused deliberations and keep in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item.

Let me turn to our agenda for this session. With regard to the first item, "Achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation", I wish to reiterate Brazil's conviction that nuclear weapons must be prohibited and completely eliminated in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner,

according to clearly defined benchmarks and timelines. Brazil believes that the Commission could focus its deliberations on three important aspects pertaining to nuclear disarmament — transparency, irreversibility and verification. Discussions on verification could build upon, inter alia, the principles agreed by the UNDC in 1988.

Moreover, we reiterate our support for the idea that the UNDC could debate principles and elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. It is our firm view that those negotiations should take place within the existing multilateral system, either at the Conference on Disarmament or, if that is not viable, at the General Assembly. The high-level conference established by resolution 68/32, which will take place no later than 2018, will be an important element in that process.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to humankind. Those weapons increase tensions in all regions of the world, foster suspicion and hinder cooperation between States. The limited reductions made thus far are, unfortunately, offset by the continued modernization and qualitative improvement of nuclear arsenals. As the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons emphasized, nuclear weapons have long-lasting, devastating, and indiscriminate effects that affect civilians foremost, which makes them incompatible with international law and international humanitarian law. Their elimination is therefore a moral imperative as well as a legal obligation.

Brazil participates on a regular basis in confidence-building mechanisms at the multilateral level, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. We also submit regular reports under the Programme of Action to Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. Furthermore, Brazil has signed the Arms Trade Treaty, currently in the process of ratification. Confidence-building measures at the regional level are also of relevance. Brazil and our neighbours in South America are strengthening confidence and enhancing transparency in defence policies, including information on military expenditures and conventional arms.

While recognizing the important role of confidence-building measures, we are open to considering other aspects pertaining to the field of conventional weapons that could be dealt by the UNDC. Brazil favours the consideration of a third agenda item, which could be devoted to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The inclusion of a third agenda item should not distract efforts towards advancing the other two items, nor should it serve the purpose of creating artificial linkages between different issues. Each topic must be considered on its own merits.

Finally, we sincerely expect that the UNDC will be able to agree on substantive recommendations in the current triennial cycle. More broadly, it is our hope that the debates held in this forum will create positive momentum towards the United Nations disarmament structure as a whole, including the upcoming 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to take place later this month.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its substantive session this year. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to the Chairs of the Working Groups. We wish all of them every success as they conduct their work and assure them the cooperation of the Cuban delegation.

The Cuban delegation fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement delivered by the delegation of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) (see A/CN.10/PV.348). We would also like to make some additional comments in our national capacity.

Cuba reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a specialized body within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations. The Commission enables us to hold in-depth discussions on specific issues relating to disarmament and to produce concrete recommendations in that field.

Cuba belongs to a region where leaders during the second Summit of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States proclaimed that Latin America and the Caribbean to be a zone of peace. That decision constitutes a historic milestone of which we are very proud. In that context, Cuba rejects the arbitrary and aggressive executive order issued by the President of the United States against the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which qualified that country

as a threat to national security. It is inconceivable that a country of solidarity, such as Venezuela, which has never invaded or attacked any other country and contributes in a substantial and altruistic way to the energy security and economic stability of a significant number of countries on the continent, could represent a threat to the security of the most powerful country of all time. The seriousness of that executive action has served as an alert for the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, which, in the context of declaring a zone of peace, repudiated any attack against them; they have had sufficient experience with imperial interventions in their history.

Nothing can justify the existence of more than 17,265 nuclear weapons. To provide for the possibility of using them is at a very minimum an irresponsible attitude. Today we know with certainty that the mushroom cloud would provoke a genocide much greater than that responsible for the mourning and suffering of thousands of Japanese families. The very broad international support for nuclear disarmament was reiterated on 26 September 2014 when, for the first time, we held the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. By a broad majority, the General Assembly called for the urgent initiation of negotiations for the speedy general conclusion of a convention on nuclear weapons, which would provide for their prohibition and total destruction.

It is urgent to move quickly towards the full implementation by the nuclear-weapons States of their commitments to achieve the priority goal of nuclear disarmament and the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons with initiatives that are irreversible, transparent and verifiable. Cuba expresses its opposition to the improvement and modernization of existing nuclear weapons and to the development of new kinds of nuclear weapons, which is inconsistent with the obligations of nuclear disarmament. We also oppose any kind of nuclear testing, including those carried out by supercomputers or other sophisticated non-explosive methods. My country reiterates the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies.

Cuba demands an end to the political manipulation surrounding the issue of non-proliferation, based on double standards and the existence of a club of the privileged who persist in refining their nuclear weapons, while attempting to question the inalienable right of the peoples of the countries of the South to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Cuba demands that the nuclear-weapon States fulfil their commitments under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and immediately implement the 13 practical measures agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to achieve nuclear disarmament and implement the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference.

We reaffirm the inalienable right of States to develop and research production and peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination, under articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. Moreover, we reaffirm the commitment of every party to the Treaty to facilitate participation in exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information related to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Cuba regrets the failure to agree on the convening of an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and reiterates that the holding of that conference is an important and integral part of the final outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Besides being an important contribution to the goal of nuclear disarmament, the establishment of such a zone would mark a momentous step forward in the Middle East peace process. Cuba urges the convening of the conference without further delay, in accordance with the agreements made by the States parties to the NPT in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

On the subject of practical measures to promote confidence in the area of conventional weapons, Cuba believes that such voluntary measures are a way to strengthen international peace and security, and should therefore be adopted in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the specific security concerns of States. Cuba recognizes the contribution of confidence-building measures in disarmament and arms control, but reiterates that they alone are no alternative to disarmament.

Cuba is prepared to continue actively working to achieve concrete results in the work of this important Commission. We regret the lack of consensus on an agenda focused on more specific issues, which would have made a much greater contribution to recommendations. A discussion on a broad nuclear disarmament convention would, we feel, promote

global efforts aimed at liberating current and future generations from the threat of nuclear weapons.

On behalf of the Cuban delegation, I reiterate our willingness to contribute to the success of our task. It is our hope that the Disarmament Commission will, at the end of this new cycle, be able to make concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

Mr. Riecken (Austria): Following the excellent chairmanships by Peru, Malta and Croatia, the United Nations Disarmament Commission is honoured to be chaired by you, Sir, for this first part of the triennial cycle. After more than 15 years of deadlock, we hope that this session will be able to build on the progress made in other forums to achieve concrete results and live up to the UNDC mandate set out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), by agreeing on recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly.

In that context, we support a more focused agenda and efforts to enhance the functioning of the Commission. We also support the proposal to invite the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and other relevant disarmament experts to present their views and prepare background papers on the agenda items, as provided for in resolution 61/98.

Austria remains fully committed to substantive progress in all the relevant disarmament forums, and especially in the General Assembly, under Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations. This year a particular focus will be on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with the Review Conference following on the heels of this UNDC session.

As all of those present may know, Austria hosted the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in December 2014, in which delegations representing 158 States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, civil society organizations and academia participated. The Vienna Conference built upon the facts-based discussions at the first and second Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo, Norway and Nayarit, Mexico, respectively, and contributed to a deeper understanding of the consequences and the actual risks posed by nuclear weapons. It addressed the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, including effects on human health, the environment, agriculture and food security, migration and the economy, as well as the risks and likelihood of the authorized or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, international response capabilities and the applicable normative framework.

The Chair's summary — although it was not a negotiated outcome document — drew eight key and irrefutable conclusions from the process with respect to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the risks associated with the existence of those weapons and the legal and moral dimension of that weaponry. It is our view that the conclusions constitute a powerful set of arguments that should lead to an urgent and profound change in the nuclear-weapons debate and in the equation on the security dimension of nuclear weapons that still prevails in the States possessing nuclear weapons and their allies.

For our part, we have issued a national pledge that includes the inescapable conclusions that Austria is convinced need to be drawn from the humanitarian arguments. Austria has therefore committed, first, to presenting the facts-based discussions, findings and compelling evidence of the Vienna Conference in all the relevant forums, in particular the NPT Review Conference of 2015 and under the United Nations framework, as they should be at the centre of all deliberations, obligations and commitments regarding nuclear disarmament. Secondly, Austria calls on all States parties to the NPT to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap in the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Thirdly, Austria pledges to cooperate with all the relevant stakeholders in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, in the light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.

In addition, Austria has invited all interested States to associate themselves with the Austrian Pledge, in order to further strengthen the humanitarian arguments and findings in advance of the upcoming NPT Review Conference and to underscore the expectation of the international community with respect to credible and urgent progress in that field. We are thankful for the great level of support and interest we have received so far and look forward to further cooperation with all interested stakeholders on this important issue.

Austria fully acknowledges the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy as reflected in article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferaton

of Nuclear Weapons. Austrian constitutional law, however, prohibits not only nuclear weapons but also facilities designed to obtain energy through nuclear fission. That is also reaffirmed by the Government's commitment to our anti-nuclear-power State policy, taking into account the principle of a free choice in energy mix. That paramount principle was reconfirmed in resolution 66/288, which endorses the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development while recognizing that the activities of countries in broader energy-related matters are of great importance and are prioritized according to their specific challenges, capacities and circumstances, including their energy mix.

Against that backdrop, it is evident that any formulation that might be construed as promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for power generation in a generalized manner would be inconsistent with the aforementioned outcome reached, at the highest political level. Moreover, as my delegation repeatedly stressed during the previoius triennial cycle, any discussions on that topic are to be conducted in the relevant forums, as set out by the General Assembly, notably in its resolution 1145 (XII), pertaining to the relationship between the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the area of conventional weapons we value the contribution that practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons can make to the maintenance and enhancement of regional and international peace and security. The report by the Working Group Chair in 2014 was therefore welcome progress, even though the United Nations Disarmament Commission was unable to agree to forward it to the General Assembly. For the coming cycle, we would advocate for consideration of explosive weapons and their devastating effects on civilian populations.

We warmly welcome the entry into force, on 24 December 2014, of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty. We anticipate that it will make a crucial contribution to peace and security, development and human rights. We are confident that the first Conference of States Parties, to be held in Mexico City in August, will be able to establish the necessary rules and structures to enable us to make further progress towards universalization.

Lastly, let me underline the importance that Austria attaches to the conventions prohibiting anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

In conclusion, let me express once more my hope that the Commission can overcome its deadlock and that it will achieve concrete progress in this cycle and issue recommendations, as tasked through its mandate. We encourage the Chair to continue to seek ways to improve working methods and enable more constructive and focused deliberations.

Ms. Telford (United Kingdom): I would like, at the outset, to express my congratulations to you, Sir, on assuming the Chair and to assure you of the full support of the United Kingdom delegation.

The United Kingdom adds its support to those States here today reaffirming their commitments to the United Nations disarmament machinery and their willingness to seek to revitalize and reinvigorate the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We particularly welcome calls to reform the UNDC and support efforts to look at its working methods. We remain determined to work with our partners across the international community to prevent proliferation, to make progress on nuclear disarmament, to build trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons States and to take tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world in which countries with nuclear weapons will be able to relinquish them.

The United Kingdom has a strong record of fulfilling our nuclear disarmament commitments and meeting our obligations as party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We made the commitment in our 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review to reduce the number of deployed warheads on each of our Vanguard-class ballistic missile submarines to 40, the number of operational submarines on each submarine to 8, and the total number of operational warheads to no more than 120. On 20 January 2015, we announced in the United Kingdom Parliament that we had met that commitment. We are continuing to work towards achieving a reduction in the size of our overall nuclear weapons stockpile to no more than 180 by the mid 2020s. The United Kingdom has long been clear that we will retain only a minimum credible nuclear deterrent and that we would consider using our nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including in defence of our NATO allies.

In February, we hosted the London P-5 conference, the sixth meeting since the P-5 first met to consider issues including nuclear disarmament. One of the reasons the

United Kingdom initiated the P-5 conferences back in 2009 was our strong desire to work together with the other nuclear weapons States on transparency and confidence-building measures. In London, the P-5 discussed how to make progress on all three pillars of the NPT, namely, disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. For the first time, we invited representatives from non-nuclear weapons States to one of our meetings. We also held an outreach event to provide civil society groups an opportunity to engage directly with the P-5. At the end of the conference, the P-5 issued a joint statement that set out the progress made in increased transparency and cooperative work, including a glossary of nuclear terms, as well as our shared resolve to tackle non-proliferation issues. We also discussed the sensitive issue of verification of nuclear disarmament, one of the more challenging hurdles we will have to overcome as we seek to build a world without nuclear weapons.

Working with Norway and the United States, the United Kingdom has committed significant effort and resources to the question of verification, and our ground-breaking work with Norway has shown that verification is neither easy nor quick. Whether the issue is instilling trust in inspectors or ensuring that monitoring equipment provides accurate readings, there are still questions to answer. Doing this without revealing sensitive information or technology is not easy, and we will continue to work to address those issues. In that regard, we welcome the launch of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification by the United States.

The UNDC session this year will be followed by the NPT Review Conference. Reaching an agreement there will be challenging, but we remain confident that consensus can be achieved, and the NPT strengthened. Consensus proved possible in 2010, and States agreed an Action Plan that set a framework for balanced progress across all three pillars. That was a real achievement, and we hope that the Review Conference will confirm its continued relevance.

Turning now to conventional weapons, we warmly welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on Christmas Eve 2014. That was the culmination of many years of hard work. The continuing momentum behind the Treaty is clear from the pace of ratification. There are now 62 States party and 130 signatures to the ATT. We welcome all those countries that have ratified and we encourage all other States to accede to the Treaty as soon as they are able. We believe that the Treaty has the potential to change the lives of those most affected by the illicit trade in arms, and the United Kingdom is very proud to have been one of the leading advocates of the ATT since the beginning.

This year we look forward to a successful first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty. We hope that that will set the Treaty on a successful and stable footing for the future. Of course, the future success of the ATT depends largely upon its universalization and robust implementation. The United Kingdom continues to work to support other States in acceding to and implementing the ATT. This year the United Kingdom has funded projects in support of the ATT and export controls with a truly global reach. That has included a successful conference on ATT implementation, legal and legislative assistance to Asian and Latin American countries and implementation assistance to African States.

The United Kingdom believes that the illicit proliferation of conventional arms, in particular small arms and light weapons, is of deep concern. Small arms and light weapons are by far the single biggest contributor to conflict, violence and crime. We, the international community, have a responsibility to combat and eradicate the threats posed by those weapons of daily destruction. Nowhere is the problem felt more than in Libya, where the violence caused by small arms and light weapons is fuelling instability and insecurity, killing thousands. The vast unsecured stockpiles of conventional arms and ammunition, as well as new inflows, pose a grave threat to peace, stability and security not just in Libya, but also in the wider region. Although work to assist our Libyan colleagues has largely been put on hold due to insecurity on the ground, Member States should remain ready to react quickly and collaboratively if the situation improves.

The forums of the United Nations disarmament machinery — the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee — are as relevant today as when they were established. They are mutually reinforcing. We believe that reinvigorating any one of the bodies will have a positive effect on the others. Last year saw a round of valuable discussions held at the Conference on Disarmament, which we hope to build on this year. We should also build on those discussions here at the UNDC.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom looks forward to 2015 being the start of a successful cycle for the UNDC.

Ms. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua would like to congratulate you on your election, Sir, and to wish you every success in your stewardship. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Iran and Ecuador on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

We support the work and efforts of the Disarmament Commission, which should maintain its relevance as an in-depth deliberative body on disarmament issues with the purpose of making concrete recommendations in that area, as part of the multilateral mechanism of the United Nations.

Nicaragua proudly welcomed the historic formal proclamation, on 29 January 2014, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, with the aim of ending the use or threat of use of force in our region forever, and including the firm commitment of the States of the region to making nuclear disarmament a priority. However, the President of the United States of America recently made an unacceptable statement, prejudicial to sovereignty and international law, calling the brotherly people and Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela a threat to his country's national security. It is incredible that he should accuse the supportive Government of Venezuela, one of the hopes of the world and a promoter of peace and integration, of being a threat to any country, let alone his own, since, as our President, Mr. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, has pointed out, even taken all together the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean do not represent a threat to the powerful North American Government. Only last week, on 1 April, we celebrated a day of solidarity with Venezuela at which messages were read from CELAC, the Union of South American Nations, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Agreement, the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement, rejecting that executive order and demanding its retraction.

Nicaragua has informed the international community of its belief in the importance of working towards the goal of total and complete disarmament, which includes not only nuclear weapons but other conventional weapons of mass destruction whose use contravenes the fundamental principles of general international and international human-rights law. In that regard, we welcomed the proclamation of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, an initiative of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, with which our nations achieved their aim of stepping up their call to States to begin negotiations on a convention that would outline a specific schedule for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear arms. The high-level international conference to be held on nuclear disarmament in 2018 would be the ideal platform for proposing such a schedule.

Concerning nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Nicaragua, as a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is an advocate for the adoption, evaluation and study of resolutions and declarations on the subject, with the goal of making progress in limiting the arms race and pursuing measures leading to complete elimination of nuclear weapons under a transparent and effective system of international control. We reiterate that bringing an end to all test explosions of nuclear weapons is the most effective route to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The terrible consequences for human beings and the environment of the 2,000 nuclear tests that have been conducted since 1945 continue to be felt by people in many parts of the world.

Nicaragua respects the inalienable right of all States to research, produce and peacefully use nuclear power without discrimination, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The international community requires concrete action, and above all it requires that nuclear-weapon States immediately comply with their obligations under article VI of the NPT, as well as the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed on in 2000 and the Action Plan for nuclear disarmament adopted in 2010. We reaffirm our desire to see the negotiation and conclusion of a binding universal legal instrument, with unconditional security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States, with the goal of achieving complete elimination of such weapons, regardless of their type or geographical location. This takes into account the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which states that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Nicaragua, as part of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone under the Tlatelolco Declaration, firmly believes that the establishment of such zones can strengthen the non-proliferation regime, and thus international peace and security, making as it does an important contribution to the nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we regret the failure to agree on the holding of an international conference in 2012 for establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We reiterate that holding that conference represents an important and integral part of the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We therefore urge the parties to schedule a conference as soon as possible. We support efforts to make humanitarian concerns a priority at the forefront of the discussion of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we welcome the holding of three International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and strongly support their call for the adoption of a legally binding international instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Concerning practical measures to promote confidence in the field of conventional arms, we welcome those that contribute to international peace and security. They should be comply strictly with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect the specific concerns and security of States, and they should not be seen as an alternative to disarmament.

My country is committed to preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trafficking in arms and has taken measures to fulfil that commitment. In Nicaragua, aware of our commitments to peace for our people and to combating and preventing the illegal arms trade, we have incorporated the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument into our national legislation through Act No. 510, our law controlling and regulating firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. We have thereby launched a phase that includes a rigorous, tough plan for controlling and registering firearms in civilian hands, as well as for decommissioning weapons of war.

We would like to congratulate Belize on its recent accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and at the same time to welcome the establishment of Central America as a zone free of cluster munitions, announced at the fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held last year. Our country is also proud to be part of the global leadership in the fight against anti-personnel mines, with our successful implementation of our national de-mining programme, whereby in 2010 we were able to declare Nicaragua, and with it the whole of Central America, the world's first subregion free of mines. We emphasize the importance of cooperation in mine clearance and assistance to victims and hope these recent successes will continue in the future.

While we have discussed the deadlock in the United Nations disarmament machinery a great deal, we have been unable to solve the real problem, which is the absence among some States of the political will needed to make real progress, particularly on nuclear disarmament. Those are the complex conditions under which we work in the Commission and continue to try to build a peaceful world. It is never too late if we have the will to change things.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming your position as Chair of the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups on their elections, and to assure the Commission of South Africa's full support.

South Africa wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

Multilateralism and multilateral diplomacy remain at the core of our efforts to find lasting solutions to the challenges that we face in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. This is why we believe it is important that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as the sole deliberative body of the multilateral disarmament machinery, agree to a set of concrete recommendations on its two agenda items in this substantive session at the commencement of the current three-year cycle. Failure to do so would only serve to further undermine the multilateral disarmament machinery, thereby adversely affecting international peace and security.

My delegation would agree with the words of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, at our opening session in which she said,

> "The Commission has an integral role to play in the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its development of guidelines and recommendations has the potential to inspire future General Assembly resolutions, while also preparing the ground for new multilateral treaties. Fulfilling this potential, however, will require the Commission to work actively to seek compromises that will expand our common ground." (*A/CN.10/PV.344, p. 2*)

South Africa reiterates NAM's deep concern over the lack of progress in implementing nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States, and echoes the calls upon them to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, weapons and their delivery systems in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the unequivocal undertaking that they provided in 2000 and further reiterated in the Final Documents of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. As far as our agenda for this substantive session is concerned, we regret that the initially proposed agenda item for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, including elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, has been omitted.

With regard to our conventional arms agenda item on practical confidence-building measures, we came close last year to the adoption of recommendations on this issue. It is our hope that the Commission will be able to build on those draft recommendations in order to make progress on them this year. As a relatively new State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, we believe that this convention has reinvigorated the debate on conventional arms control. The Treaty will also ensure that its States parties will be required to take a number of concrete measures at their respective national levels, thereby further enhancing practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

In conclusion, the Disarmament Commission has faced the challenge of not being able to make any progress for several years now. We hope that all delegations will be able to display the necessary political will so that real progress may be made in this session.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): Allow me, Sir, to express my congratulations to you on assuming the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for its 2015 substantive session. My delegation is confident that under your able guidance we will proactively move forward in our work and fulfil the Commission's mandate.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, for his stewardship and tireless efforts during last year's session. In the same vein, I would like to thank Ms. Angela Kane, express our appreciation for her leadership and the work she has done as the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

In this light, my delegation wishes to congratulate Mr. Kim Won-soo on the assumption of his duties as the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We wish him great success as he takes up his new duties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

The importance of the UNDC is unquestionable. It is the main subsidiary body of the General Assembly on disarmament matters. As the sole deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral machinery, it allows for in-depth discussions on specific issues of disarmament, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Regrettably, since 1999 we have been unable to submit any such recommendations, and thus have not fulfilled the mandate of the Commission. Although promising, the last session fell short of delivering recommendations to the General Assembly. It is our collective responsibility to overcome the impasse that has plagued the UNDC since the turn of the century. It is up to us, the States Members of the United Nations, to come together and revitalize this Commission.

As the UNDC enters a new three-year cycle, my delegation sincerely hopes that this time we will be able to fulfil the Disarmament Commission's mandate and provide the General Assembly with concrete recommendations on disarmament issues. Nevertheless, in order to achieve such a result, all Member States should show the necessary political will to reach agreement on recommendations. We urge all Member States to display increased political will, flexibility and cooperation during this new cycle.

The Royal Government of Cambodia reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament and emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all their aspects are essential to strengthening international peace and security and to promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in the nuclear-weapon States' fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations. Moreover, in view of the central role of the United Nations as a universal multilateral framework for consideration of disarmament issues, non-proliferation agreements should be addressed through inclusive, open and non-discriminatory processes and should not impose restrictions on access to the nuclear technology, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes needed by developing countries.

While considering that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone framework for addressing nuclear weapons, my Government welcomes the positive outcomes of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, held in New York from 28 April to 9 May 2014. My delegation looks forward to the convening of the 2015 Review Conference, scheduled to take place at the end of this month. It is important that we evaluate the results of the implementation of the NPT over the last five years and move forward in its implementation during the next five years.

I would again like to underscore the need for strong and genuine political will in support of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and its mandate. My delegation stands ready to work constructively with other States Members of the United Nations to achieve success in the present three-year cycle of the UNDC. We wish you, Mr. Chair, every success in your work and are confident that, under your able guidance, we can achieve positive results as we strive to make progress on the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.